



Think Computer Foundation  
20560 Shelburne Road  
Shaker Heights, OH 44122

telephone +1 415 670 9350  
fax +1 415 373 3959  
web <http://www.thinkcomputer.org>

A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Foundation  
EIN 34-1937820

April 19, 2017

*Via E-Mail*

The Honorable Rob Bonta  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol Room 2148  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 1479 (SUPPORT)

Dear Assemblyman Bonta:

Think Computer Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that jointly manages the legal transparency web site PlainSite (<https://www.plainsite.org>) in conjunction with its sister company, Think Computer Corporation. PlainSite makes approximately nine million court dockets available to the public free of charge. The project was largely inspired by our interactions with California agencies, California legislators, and the court system circa 2011.

We fully support any bill that would strengthen California's Public Records Act ("PRA"). We have made numerous Public Records Act requests over several years to obtain information about the California Department of Business Oversight (DBO), formerly the Department of Financial Institutions (DFI), as well as the Judicial Council. If anything, this bill does not go far enough, because the Judicial Council should be formally considered an executive agency for the purposes of requiring transparency under the PRA.

California agencies and the Judicial Council use various tricks to evade public disclosure requirements on a regular basis. In the case of DBO, files requested and found were not provided to us because the agency argued that they were not required to provide them *electronically*, and that someone from our organization needed to physically pick them up in San Francisco. This transpired after DBO had already responded to several other of our requests electronically. In another example, the Judicial Council Technology Committee (JCTC) silently implemented a policy of actively refusing to disclose whether it had received any public comments in the past; refusing to discuss what they actually were; and failing to note them on the next agenda, let alone discuss them.

The California courts could also benefit from a consistent transparency policy. Presently, despite the fact that all California county courts are governed by the same California law, many courts make court files available

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electronically for free (as they should and are required to), while others, such as Los Angeles County Superior Court, charge obscene rates for basic public information. Obtaining documents for a Los Angeles County court case can easily cost thousands of dollars, and the Judicial Council has been only superficially responsive to our inquiries about its pricing scheme. Nor will the Court disclose its financial statements under the PRA. This is an outrageous state of affairs.

We therefore encourage you to pass Assembly Bill 1479 and other laws that will help promote transparency in California's government.

Should you be interested in any of the issues raised in this letter, I can be reached at +1 415 670 9350, or by e-mail at [aaron.greenspan@plainsite.org](mailto:aaron.greenspan@plainsite.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aaron Greenspan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Aaron Greenspan  
President  
Think Computer Foundation